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Chinook, Hobson, Malta, Roundup and Cooke City Awarded \$200,000 in Tourism Infrastructure Grants

(HELENA) – Today Governor Brian Schweitzer announced the Montana Department of Commerce has awarded \$200,000 in funds from the Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) to five Montana communities. Each community will use its funds to complete tourism related facility improvements.

“Tourism Infrastructure Investment funds significantly enhance tourism facilities in towns all across the state,” said Governor Brian Schweitzer. “Improvements to these projects will help keep some of Montana’s 10 million visitors here longer, allowing them to spend more out of state dollars in our local communities.”

Montana Department of Commerce Director Anthony J. Preite approved the TIIP grant funding for the five tourism-related projects following recommendations from the Department of Commerce Travel Montana staff and the state’s Tourism Advisory Council. The five TIIP grant recipients were selected from 27 applications requesting \$1.79 million from the Commerce Department program.

“The investment of tourism ‘bed tax’ dollars into these five projects leverages \$1.65 million in community, state, federal and foundation dollars, creating and supporting local construction and service industry jobs,” said Preite.

The 2007 TIIP Grant Awards include:

\$50,000	Blaine County Wildlife Museum, Chinook, for creation of a Moose-Grizzly Encounter Display and other work needed to finish the museum and allow it to be open to the public.
\$50,000	Friends of the Hobson Library for creation of a Hobson Museum through the renovation of the historic American Legion Hall in the community.
\$50,000	Judith River Foundation, Inc., for exhibits, furnishings and equipment needed to complete the Great Plains Dinosaur Center in Malta.
\$20,000	Musselshell Valley Historical Museum, Roundup, for a new Roof.
\$30,000	Colter Pass, Cooke City, Silver Gate Chamber of Commerce for creation of the Shoofly Heritage Center in Cooke City

Betsy Baumgart, Administrator for Travel Montana, congratulates these communities for their efforts to develop and enhance their tourism product. “It’s this type of commitment that helps provide a quality experience for our visitors, which in turn, keeps them coming back for more,” said Baumgart.

Since 1995, TIIP grants have provided just under \$2.7 million in tourism “bed tax” funds to 61 projects in 40 Montana communities. These TIIP-assisted projects represent a total investment of almost \$33 million in Montana’s tourism-related infrastructure.

TIIP grants funds are provided by a 4% state tourism “bed tax” which is assessed on the lodging price of all accommodations across Montana, including campgrounds. The grants are awarded through a competitive process and require a \$1 local match for every \$2 provided by grant funds.

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